

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) A device for engaging tissue at a puncture site and facilitating closure of the puncture site, comprising:

an annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, ~~the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, with the body being configured to return toward the substantially planar configuration,~~ the body comprising a plurality of looped elements extending about a periphery of the body, ~~each looped element including a curved outer region connected to a curved inner region, the curved outer region being out of phase with adjacent curved inner regions, adjacently positioned looped elements being connected to form an endless sinusoidal pattern; and~~

a plurality of tines having free distal ends extending from the looped elements towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body ~~in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration, the tines comprising tips having a predetermined spacing from one another in the planar configuration, wherein the annular shaped body is configured to resiliently allow the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another, and wherein the curved inner regions limit penetration depths of the adjacent tines; and~~

the body and tines comprising a resilient material so that the body and tines normally lie in a planar, deployed first configuration, the material of the body and tines being sufficiently resilient so that when a force is applied to the tines they are forced from the planar, deployed first configuration into a transverse, pre-deployment second configuration in which the tines and free distal ends are spread open and generally extend in the direction of the central axis for insertion of the free distal ends into the tissue around the puncture site, and thereafter the body and tines will automatically return toward the first configuration so as to engage the puncture site and facilitate closure thereof after the force is removed.

18.-35. (Canceled).

36. (Currently Amended) A device for engaging tissue at a puncture site and facilitating closure of the puncture site, comprising:

an annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, ~~the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, with the body being configured to return toward the substantially planar configuration,~~ the body comprising a plurality of looped elements defining extending about an outer periphery of the body, ~~each looped element including a curved outer region connected to a curved inner region, the curved outer region being out of phase with adjacent curved inner regions, adjacently positioned looped elements being connected to form an endless sinusoidal pattern; and~~

a plurality of arcuate tines having free distal ends extending from the ~~curved inner regions looped elements~~ towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body ~~in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration, wherein the annular shaped body is configured to resiliently allow the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another and to be moved from within the substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards the transverse configuration extending out of the plane and wherein the curved inner regions limit penetration depths of the adjacent tines; and~~

the body and arcuate tines comprising a resilient material so that the body and arcuate tines normally lie in a planar, deployed first configuration, the material of the body and arcuate tines being sufficiently resilient so that when a force is applied to the arcuate tines they are forced from the planar, deployed first configuration into a transverse, pre-deployment second configuration in which the arcuate tines and free distal ends are spread open and generally extend in the direction of the central axis for insertion of the free distal ends into the tissue around the puncture site, and thereafter the body and arcuate tines will automatically return toward the first configuration so as to engage the puncture site and facilitate closure thereof after the force is removed.

37. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of tines further comprises primary tines having a first length and secondary tines having a second length.

38. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 37, wherein the first lengths of the primary tines are substantially longer than the second lengths of the secondary tines.

39. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 37, wherein the one or more secondary tines comprise tines disposed on either side of a primary tine.

40. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the body is biased towards the planar configuration for biasing the plurality of tines generally towards the central axis.

41. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of tines and the body are formed from a single sheet of material.

42. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 41, wherein the sheet of material comprises a superelastic alloy.

43. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the looped elements are expandable between expanded and compressed states for increasing and reducing, respectively, a periphery of the body in the transverse orientation.

44. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 43, wherein looped elements are biased towards the compressed state.

45-49. (Canceled).

50. (Currently Amended) A device for engaging tissue at a puncture site and facilitating closure of the puncture site, comprising:

an annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, ~~the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, with the body being configured to return toward the substantially planar configuration,~~ the body comprising a plurality of looped elements extending about a periphery of the body, ~~each looped element including a curved outer region connected to a curved inner region, the curved outer region being out of phase with adjacent curved inner regions, adjacently positioned looped elements being connected to form an endless sinusoidal pattern, the body being biased to return to the substantially planar configuration; and~~

a plurality of substantially straight tines having free distal ends extending from the looped elements towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body ~~in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration, the tines comprising tips having a predetermined spacing from one another in the planar configuration wherein the curved inner regions form a biased spring element disposed between adjacent tines between the looped elements and tips of the tines, the biased spring element resiliently allowing the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another, the curved inner regions limiting penetration depths of the adjacent tines; and~~

the body and tines comprising a resilient material so that the body and tines normally lie in a planar, deployed first configuration, the material of the body and tines being sufficiently resilient so that when a force is applied to the tines they are forced from the planar, deployed first configuration into a transverse, pre-deployment second configuration in which the tines and free distal ends are spread open and generally extend in the direction of the central axis for insertion of the free distal ends into the tissue around the puncture site, and thereafter the body and tines will automatically return toward the first configuration so as to engage the puncture site and facilitate closure thereof after the force is removed.

51. (Canceled).

52. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 50, wherein the plurality of substantially straight tines further comprises primary tines having a first length and secondary tines having a second length.

53. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 52, wherein the first lengths of the primary tines are substantially longer than the second lengths of the secondary tines.

54. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 52, wherein the one or more secondary tines comprise tines disposed on either side of a primary tine.

55. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 50, wherein the body is biased towards the planar configuration for biasing the plurality of tines generally towards the central axis.

56. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 50, wherein the plurality of tines, the spring element, and the body are formed from a single sheet of material.

57. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 56, wherein the sheet of material comprises a superelastic alloy.

58. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 50, wherein the spring element is expandable between expanded and compressed states for increasing and reducing, respectively, a periphery of the body in the transverse orientation.

59. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 58, wherein the spring element is biased towards the compressed state.